



A helping hand to a cosy home

Annual Review 2017

‘To work for households in all Orkney communities to reduce levels of fuel poverty and achieve affordable warmth’



THAW Orkney and the Orkney Pipeline Partnership Approach:

- Testing the concept for tackling fuel poverty & affordable warmth
- Seeking to co-ordinate in order for the maximum impact to be achieved
 - for the householder
 - for the relevant organisations
- Involving two aspects holistically - people and their properties
- Aiming to meet the needs of vulnerable households

Chair's Report

What is THAW all about?

Fundamentally, THAW Orkney is about people; it is about helping people live comfortably and affordably in their homes. It is about reaching the most vulnerable folk in our islands. It is about making their lives and homes warmer and healthier.

Where did THAW come from?

A group of individuals with a concern that more could be done in Orkney to help folk in fuel poverty held a workshop in October 2013. At the time 58% of Orkney households were estimated to be fuel poor. It was in December 2014 before THAW became a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation and then a second workshop was held in March 2015 which endorsed the concept of the Orkney Pipeline Partnership to tackle fuel poverty.

THAW, along with Orkney Care and Repair (OC&R) and the Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau (OCAB), then secured £399,766 from the British Gas Energy Trust and a further £88,750 through Energy Action Scotland's Warm and Healthy Homes initiative. This allowed a staff team to be appointed between December 2015 and January 2016. It was an immense task to get an organisation up and running from scratch, but in just six weeks, from the first staff member being appointed, the first referral was accepted in mid-January and by mid-February our first client household had a new boiler installed.

Where are we now?

At the end of an extremely busy 15 months of activity, THAW has dealt with over 400 clients and our installation budget of over £260,000 has enabled energy efficiency works worth over £600,000 to go ahead in Orkney. Working effectively with many other agencies and organisations, we have made a significant impact on the lives of many of Orkney's most vulnerable households.

Frustratingly, the fuel poverty statistics have continued to rise in recent years, with 63% of Orkney households - and 85% of pension age households - in fuel poverty by 2016. It means Orkney is in the unenviable position of being top of Scotland's fuel poverty league table. And behind each individual statistic is a person, a family, a household. In many respects, it could be any one of us.

Where are we going?

The challenges remain immense, especially on the back of energy giant SSE's 14.9% electricity price rise, which came into effect at the end of April. THAW will have to redouble its efforts, along with its partners, to reach as many folk as possible, and to ensure that its funding is utilised for the most vulnerable households identified, that the partnership is developed and enhanced and that more funding is secured to maintain and enhance the invaluable support provided to the folk of Orkney.

This is the second Chair's report in the second annual report and review of THAW, and we intend to be here for as long as there are folk in Orkney who cannot heat their homes affordably. I commend this report and the activities of THAW and its partners to you.

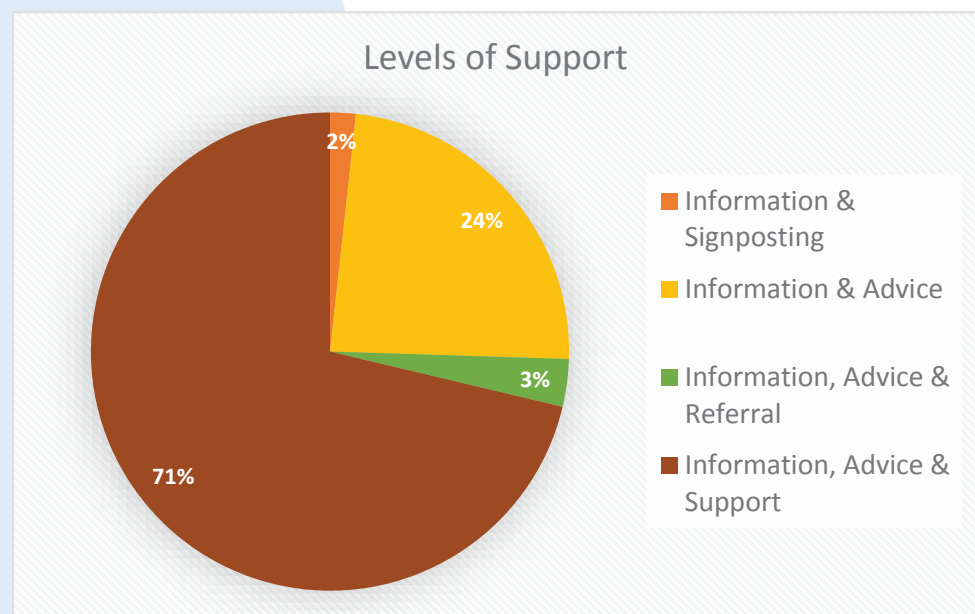
Robert Leslie, THAW Orkney Chair

The statistics behind the clients:

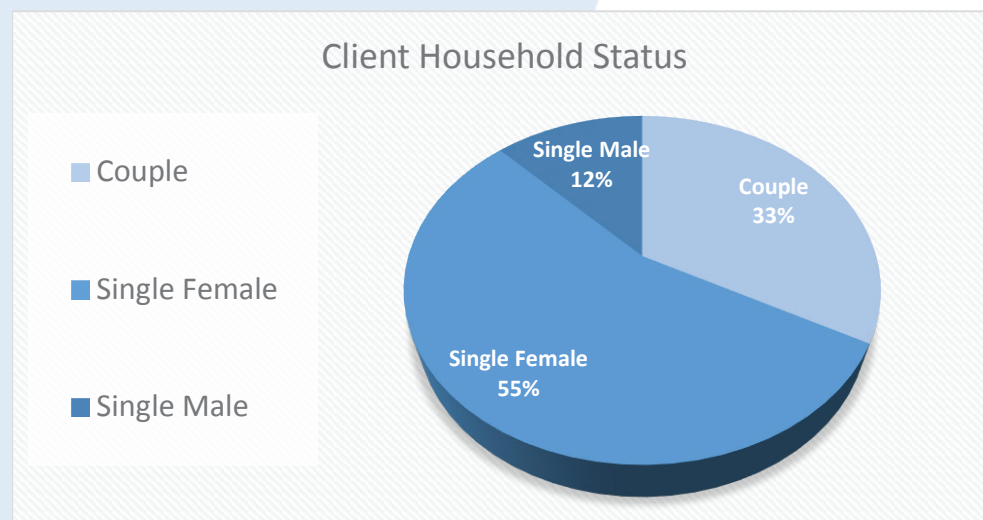
During the first 15 months of operations **404 client households** were assisted

- Level A - 7 households were assisted with information and sign posting to other agencies, such as, Home Energy Scotland;
- Level B - 96 households received information and advice, for example, information on various grant and loan programmes as well as energy efficiency advice that are available;
- Level C - 13 households were assisted with information, advice and referral to relevant agencies and organisations, for instance, Firefly Energi for help with insulation measures;
- Level D - 288 households received in-depth information, advice and support, for example, providing cosy home packs to social tenants, installing and funding installation measures, giving technical advice and providing third party support.

Only 2% of clients required sign posting;
98% received advice, information, referral and / or support



113 households were occupied by couples, 189 occupied by single females and 42 households occupied by single males. Known households are 344, sometimes in the case of a brief enquiry of one off advice we are not able to find out the household type. 60 Households fell into this category.



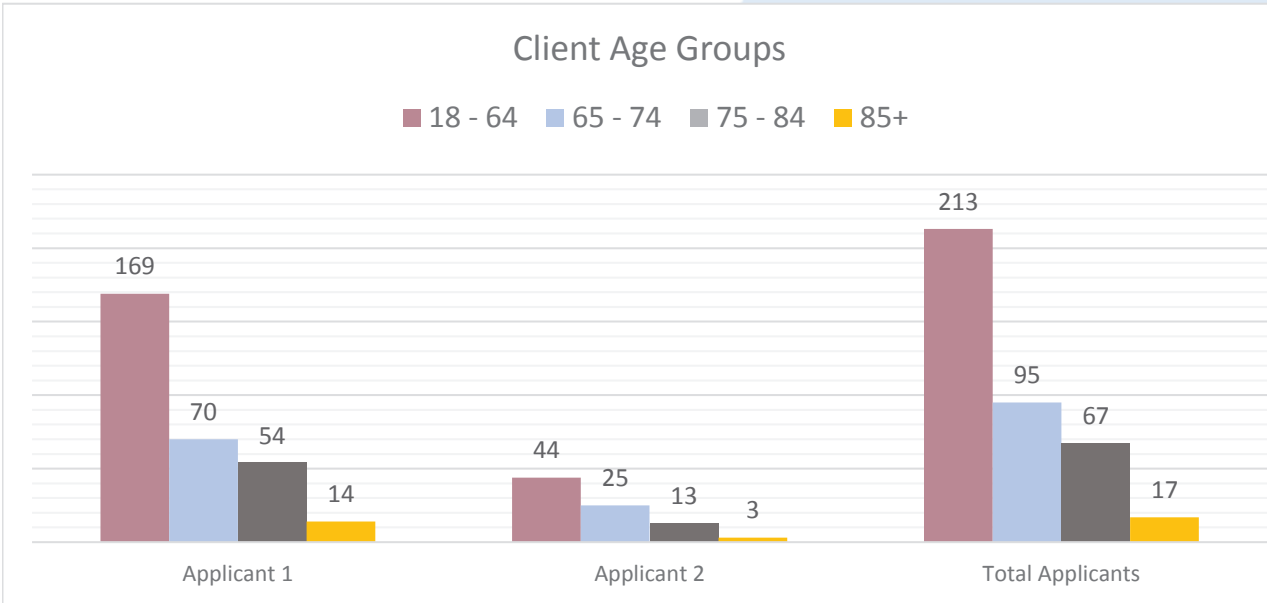
The majority of clients were single female households.

1 in 3 households were occupied by a couple.

The statistics behind the clients:

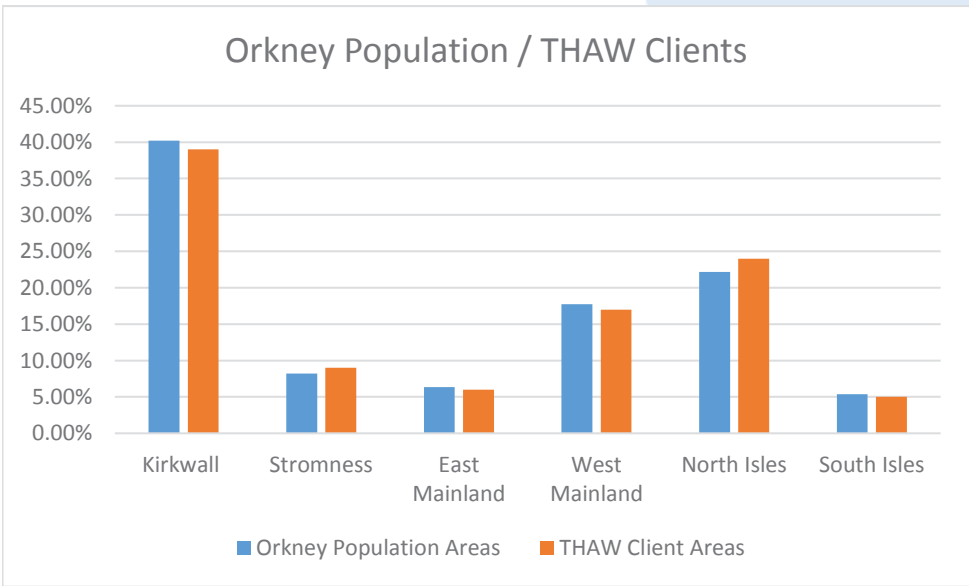
Client’s ages ranged across the spectrum with **46% being of pensionable age** (392 client ages known; 179 of those are of pensionable age).

- 18 - 64 years = **213** clients
- 65 - 74 years = **95** clients
- 75 - 84 years = **67** clients
- 85+ years = **17** clients



(Where applicant 2 is stated it represents a household lived in by a couple)

The majority of clients were self-referred (**56%**) although some targeting of particular areas was undertaken:



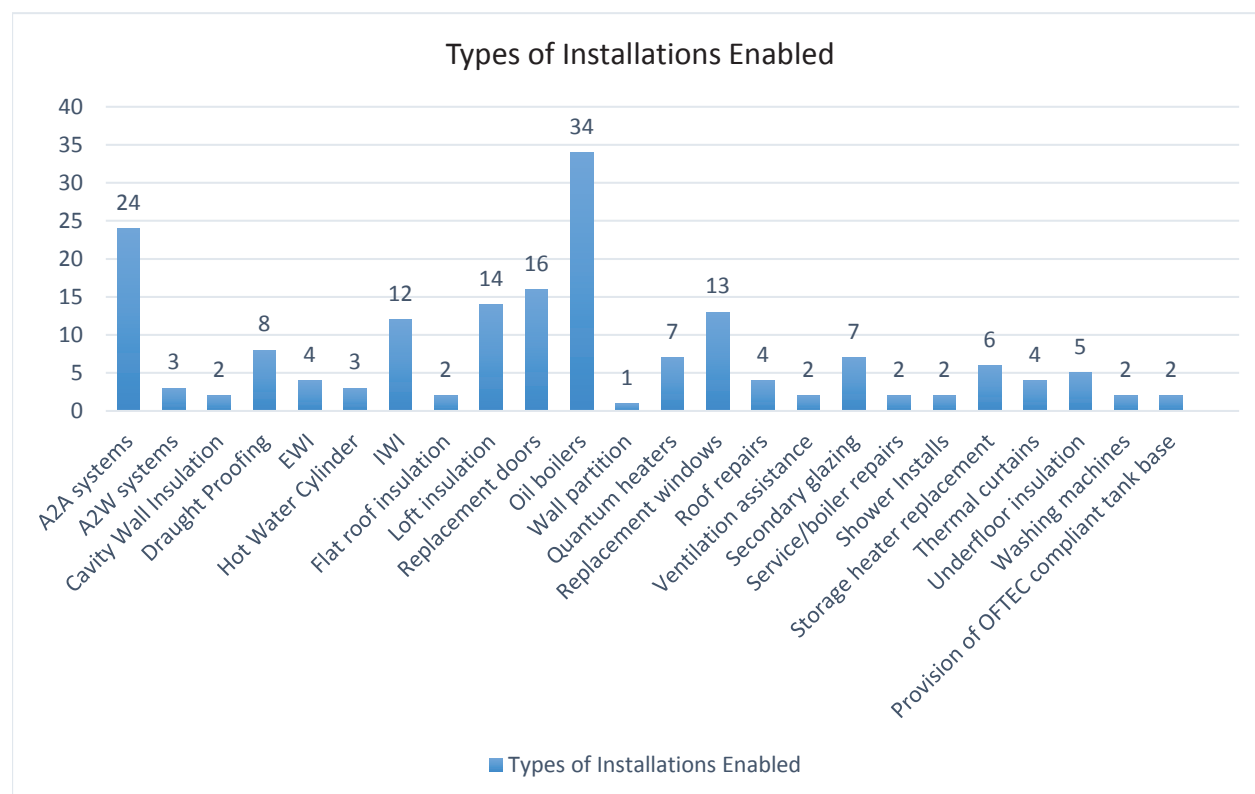
THAW clients reflect closely the population spread across the County

The statistics behind the clients:

We were able to use our grant monies to partly or fully fund installations. Where a partly funded installation was undertaken then other monies were levered into the County:

Our grants of **£256,655** enabled an estimated **£603,036** worth of measures to be installed in Orkney (a conservative estimate was used when an installation agency was unable to give the actual costs for 'commercially sensitive reasons'. In these circumstances figures are based on averages obtained from national sources).

The types of installations we enabled were **significant and wide ranging**:



(179 total installations)

Over the year we developed Cosy Home Packs specifically for social tenants. 65 packs were distributed with a total value of around £7,000. Two types of pack were available, depending on the number of household occupants, long-term health conditions, number of dependent children and fuel poverty levels.

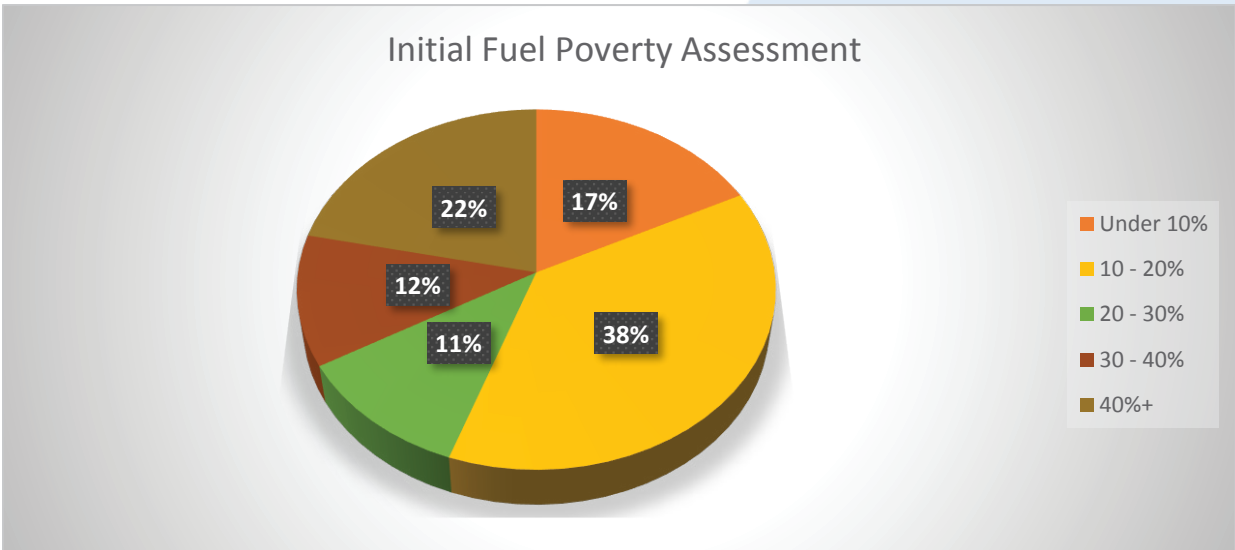
Due to the non-installation aspects of the packs, we can perhaps sometimes underestimate the value to the householder, but as one client commented:

"To the THAW Orkney Staff Team, thank you so much for your help and kindness on the 'phone and in person. The box of goodies I have been given has already proved very useful. The kettle is lovely, so much smaller than my old one and easier to fill, and the blanket, while very light in weight is lovely and warm. I haven't used the lamps or checked my electricity statement because it will be too soon to find out whether the credit has been received. My special thanks go to the gentleman who delivered the box and fitted the draught excluder for me. Thank you again for the lovely gift."

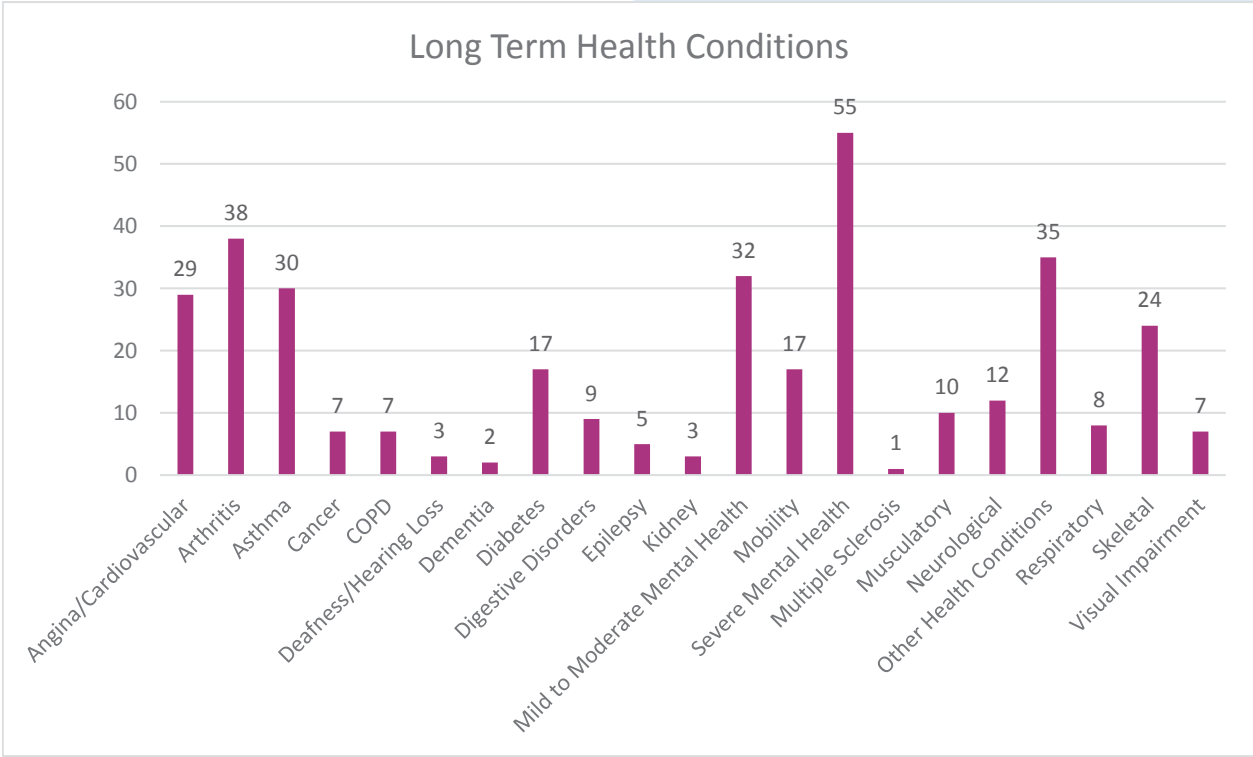
The statistics behind the clients:

Client's Initial **Fuel Poverty Assessment** percentages reflected some shocking levels:

- **83% of clients** approaching THAW are in fuel poverty
- **45% of clients** (*9 in 20 households*) are in extreme fuel poverty
- **22% of clients** (*1 in 5 households*) are in 40%+ fuel poverty



Householders who do have long-term health issues typically are dealing with multiple issues. 351 long term health issues were identified within 118 households. The 'other' long-term health issues outlined below by clients, included for example, dyslexia, hernia, colostomy, childhood polio, chronic reflux, pancreatitis and liver disease.



How we've helped our clients:

Client A

Client A first came to us for support in March 2016, enquiring about any help for a new central heating system. She explained that she only had a solid fuel coal fire, which was costing her a large amount of money to heat her home. She also informed us that she had no heating at night and very little during the day and because she had ill health complications, she found it very difficult to collect and carry coal to fuel her system. THAW went for a home visit two weeks after her initial contact with us and found out that the client needed as much assistance as possible due to how cold her home was.

Client A suffers from a complicated and painful health condition and doctors are still trying to diagnose this. She fell gravely ill in 2015, so it was of a great concern for us to help her have adequate heat in her home.

Thankfully we could help and fully funded a new air to air system as well as a new shower and 3 x replacement windows. The work was project managed by Orkney Care and Repair and the total amount of funding came to **£6,632.38**. It is important to note that the client would not have qualified for any other grant funded programs which could offer her a heating system at the time.

To begin with client A initially thought that we wouldn't be able to help, she said, ***"It was difficult with other programmes, I didn't have any faith before. I've been down every avenue with every other scheme and didn't hold out much hope with THAW but I was completely wrong."***

She now says, ***"It's 150% warmer! I'm more than satisfied, there is now no condensation and it's made such a difference. I couldn't get problems across to other people before, as they can't understand. When I was told, what was being offered, I had no idea I was going to be given additional measures like the shower and the windows, I thought it was just the heating. I was flabbergasted, just over the moon!"***

When asked whether she thought that the installations have helped her to be warmer compared to last winter she said ***"The last 14 winters! I no longer have to use the calor gas heater but I still use the fire."*** She is unsure how much exactly she will save as her electricity has gone up but she thinks it is around £500 a year as she will no longer have to buy coal.

client A said after the work was completed:

"I am just writing to thank you and everyone who has been involved in the process which has resulted in the upgrade to my heating as well as all the additional improvements which have been made to my home in the past month. To say I am delighted with the changes is an understatement and I really cannot thank everybody enough. The chaps from Paterson's & Clouston's all did a splendid job and I would appreciate if you could pass my thanks on to both companies and also to Ian Pickles who was instrumental in getting all the things done following his assessments of the property. I cannot over emphasis what a positive change and impact on my day to day living these things have made. I am more than delighted, beyond delighted. The work I've had done has completely transformed my life and living for the better. I am extremely grateful for all the financial help received as I would never have been able to afford the improvements if it had not been for it. I can't thank THAW enough and everyone for what they have done for me. With sincerest thanks."

How we've helped our clients:

Client B & C

Client B and her partner client C came to us in January 2016 and at first they weren't sure there was much we could do to help them, as they had tried in the past to gain support but found the process of going through applications very difficult and complicated with other programmes.

They live in an old stone cottage and the only insulation that they had in the property when we first visited, was a small amount of sheep's wool in the attic. They had single glazed windows which were very draughty and leaking, roof problems, serious dampness issues and at the time, the only heating that they had in the home was a small wood burner in the living room.

They stressed that that house was between 1-8 degrees in temperature, dropping to 1 degree at night. Also, the temperature outside was the same as in the house. Client C suffered from pneumonia last year and most of the time they had to wear specialised thermal suits just to keep warm.

Although both of working age, client C fell very ill the previous year and was diagnosed with a severe long term health condition which means he can no longer work. We helped refer them to the Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau for an income maximisation check and because of client C's health condition, we helped to increase his income through PIP by several hundred pounds per month. They said about this, ***"Having the additional income gave us a breathing space to live life a bit more normally and we are less worried as we were just existing before."***

As they were now receiving PIP, they were eligible to be referred to Warmworks, a national programme, and were offered secondary glazing, loft insulation and internal wall insulation. THAW acted as constant third party support on behalf of the clients to ensure that the work was carried out without any issues. There was also a shortfall amount of **£1747.64** which THAW helped to fund to enable the measures to go ahead, otherwise the application would potentially have been cancelled.

Because no heating was offered by any of the external government funded initiatives without the need for an extensive shortfall amount (i.e Warmworks could have offered an air to water system for an additional £4,000) we fully funded an air to air heating system which was recommended by our project managing partner, Orkney Care and Repair (C&R), as the best option for the house.

C&R are also currently working closely with the occupational therapy department to install a new kitchen which would not have been possible if client C had not been in receipt of PIP. Additionally, we funded repairs to made to the damaged and leaking roof, as without this in place, then the IWI and other measures offered by Warmworks would not have been able to go ahead.

clients B and C said after the work was completed:

"For our health, this has made a big difference. There are certain health issues that the installation has helped with and its made a huge difference to our standard of living and wellbeing. We certainly feel more positive about coming home and the work carried out has improved with my pain levels. Having this support and work done has also made the fire more efficient and with less draughts this has changed the draw on the fire meaning that wood lasts longer. It's now too warm to have both on at the same time and it's reduced the cost of wood. We also just had our electricity bill in and it's the lowest it's ever been! This is excellent news!! Having the new heating system has made the world of difference to us. To Stacy, without doubt, the work you and THAW have done has changed our lives. We can't thank you enough. It is an incredible feeling having a warm living room and bedroom. All the other improvements have also made such a difference. You have been so helpful all along the way. You are excellent at your job Stacy, with grateful thanks."

Comments on our Services:

"The new heating was installed yesterday and whilst it is early days yet we are very pleased with it. We are grateful to THAW and I have no concerns about your service. We can't thank you enough for what you have done for us."

"You have given us life after having no heating for 6 years"

"So supportive and helpful. Our house was damp before and this has helped to reduce the condensation, it's a much healthier house"

"Very polite and helpful and always do a first class job!"

"We would like to thank the whole team for their help in achieving comfort in such an old and draughty dwelling! It is fair to say that, as far as THAW is concerned, we have run out of superlatives. The organisation can be seen as a paradigm for all others working in this field. Every good wish for the continued success of THAW and more power to your collective elbows"

"This will be the first warm Christmas we will have had in years, thank you from the bottom of my heart."

"The service THAW provides is so important for the people of Orkney"

"So efficient and so helpful and they care so much. Lost for words."

Governance and Staffing 2016-17

Trustees

Janice Annal

Erik Firth (*Treasurer*)

Ian Garman (*Secretary*)

Robert Leslie (*Chair*)

Mark Hull

Caron Jenkins

Imogen Sawyer (*Vice Chair*)

John Ross Scott

Doreen Sinclair

Legal Advisor

Georgette Herd

Orkney Islands Council Observers

Luke Fraser

Steven Aberdein

THAW Orkney Pipeline Partnership Staffing

Based in THAW

Paul Gray, Manager (*until July 2016*)

Peter Rickard, Manager (*from August 2016*)

Stacy Johnston, Affordable Warmth Officer

Dawn Mayes, Administrator (*until December 2016*)

Sam Chalmers, Agency Administrator (*from January 2017*)

Based in OCAB

Fiona Bradley, Affordable Warmth Support Worker

Catherine Hine, Affordable Warmth Support Worker

Based in OC&R

John MacIntosh, Affordable Warmth Technical Officer (*until July 2016*)

Ian Pickles, OHAL Technical Officer (*seconded from August to December 2016*)

Orkney Surveying Services

Billy Groundwater (*from January 2017*)

Thank you

Our grateful thanks to the funders of THAW Orkney. Without their support THAW would not have been able to achieve so much:

- British Gas Energy Trust / Charis Grants award of £399,766 over the last two financial years to enable the Orkney Pipeline Partnership to be operational with staffing and property affordable warmth installations
- British Gas Energy Trust / Charis Grants award of £10,000 to enable a Social Return On Investment independent research to be undertaken
- Energy Action Scotland's Warm & Healthy Homes initiative making available up to £88,750 for household energy saving installations
- Orkney Islands Council's grant of £20,000
- Organisations who have arranged fund-raising events
- Individuals who have generously made personal donations to further THAW's work of tackling fuel poverty

Further information

Further copies of this report can be obtained from THAW's website:

<http://www.thaworkney.co.uk/>

THAW can be contacted via email at:

info@thaworkney.co.uk

Or in person at:

15 Victoria Street, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1DN

Tel: 01856 878388